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THREEPENCE

Christian Mystics

No. 5.

JACOB
BŒHME

BY

W. P. SWAINSON

LONDON

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Jacob Böhme

THE GOD-TAUGHT PHILOSOPHER

BY

W. P. SWAINSON



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BOEHME Jakob [1575-
1624]



The object of these brief sketches on the "Christian Mystics," is to arouse interest in a subject but little known and still less understood. It is hoped that they may lead to a deeper study of the lives and works of those men and women whose influence on the world has been far greater than most people imagine.

I

BÖEHME—BIRTH—YOUTH—APPRENTICED TO
A SHOEMAKER—THE MYSTERIOUS STRAN-
GER—PERIOD OF DOUBT — FIRST ILLU-
MINATION—MARRIES AND HAS A FAMILY
—SECOND ILLUMINATION — CONTINUES
SHOEMAKING — THIRD ILLUMINATION —
WRITES AURORA.

JACOB BÖEHME was born at Old Seiden-
berg, near Goerlitz, in Lusatia, in the
year 1575. As a boy he tended the cattle.
At an early age he developed the visionary
faculty, and was able to see in the spirit world.
He went to school, where he learned to read
and write. On leaving he was apprenticed
to a shoemaker.

One day, while his master and mistress
were out, a stranger entered the shop, bought
a pair of boots, for which he paid a long
price, and departed. On reaching the street
he called out to Böehme, “Jacob, come
hither.”

Böehme was greatly surprised to find that
the man knew his name. Obeying the sum-
mons he went outside, whereupon the stranger
fixed a kind, yet penetrating, glance upon
him, and said, “Jacob, thou art yet but
little, but the time will come when thou shalt
be great, and become another man, and the
world shall marvel at thee. Therefore be
pious, fear God, and reverence His Word;
especially read diligently the Holy Scriptures,
where thou hast comfort and instruction; for
thou must endure much misery and poverty,

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and suffer persecution. But be courageous and persevere, for God loves and is gracious unto thee." Thereupon the stranger clasped his hand, looked kindly at him, and disappeared.

A similar incident occurred in the life of Madame Guyon.

This mysterious stranger was an Adept, one of those highly-evolved men who watch over all who earnestly and truly endeavour to follow in the footsteps of Christ the Master, and desire to be used for His service.

The interview made a lasting impression on Jacob. He gave himself up more fully to God, became more serious and meditative, and also more childlike and humble.

He admonished his fellow-workmen, the result being that his master dismissed him. He then became a travelling journeyman.

During this period Böehme was greatly troubled with doubts. He fell into a profound and deep melancholy. The mystery of life, and the sin and misery he saw on all sides, almost overwhelmed him.

At length his first state of illumination took place. It lasted for seven days in succession. During all that time his higher consciousness was active. His external, or bodily, faculties also continued in their normal condition. His superior consciousness, or what some would call his inner body, being awake, he was naturally cognizant of what was taking place on the plane corresponding thereto. He saw, not only what God is, but *how* He is what He is.

In 1594 Böehme married a tradesman's daughter, by whom he had four children.

During the year 1600, at the age of twenty-five, a second divine illumination was vouch-

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safed to Jacob. He fell into a deep and inward ecstasy, so that he could look into the principles and deepest foundations of things, gazing, as it were, into their very heart. He thus learned the ground of all things. Even the herbs and grass harmonized with that inwardly seen. He thanked God in silence for the vision, but told no one.

He continued his shoemaking, and attended to the duties incumbent on a man with a wife and family.

Ten years later, in 1610, when thirty-five years of age, his third illumination took place. That which had previously seemed chaotic and fragmentary now formed into a coherent whole. He had found Unity, and realized the underlying Oneness of all things.

Fearing lest he should forget what he had seen, he wrote it down in order to preserve it, though not for publication. This was the origin of his "Aurora," or "Morning Redness." He began writing in 1612, and continued till his death in 1624, composing some thirty books in all. They are full of the deepest mysteries regarding God, Christ, heaven and hell, and the secrets of nature. All he did was for God's glory and the redemption of mankind, nothing for personal gain.

II

PERSECUTION BY RICHTER — BŒHME'S WRITINGS CONFISCATED — PERIOD OF SILENCE—RECOMMENCES HIS WRITINGS—HIS WORKS — THE WAY TO CHRIST — RICHTER RENEWS HIS PERSECUTIONS—BŒHME GOES TO DRESDEN—TAKEN ILL —RETURNS TO GOERLITZ—DEATH.

A NOBLEMAN—Carl Von Endern—who happened to see Bœhme's "Aurora," was so struck by it that he had several copies made. By accident one of these fell into the hands of Gregory Richter, the Lutheran pastor of Goerlitz, a narrow-minded bigot, void of spiritual insight. He was exasperated at the idea of a poor shoemaker knowing more of God's dealings than himself, and from that moment became Bœhme's bitterest enemy. He publicly denounced him as a most dangerous heretic, insulted him in every possible way, and even threatened to have him imprisoned.

At length Bœhme was brought before the City Council, who ordered him to leave. The following day they rescinded the order, but confiscated the manuscript of "Aurora." They told him to stick to his last, and write no more books.

This action of the Council had the opposite effect to that which was intended, for it brought Bœhme's writings to the notice of many who would otherwise have never heard of them. He thus became known to those better educated than himself, from whom he afterwards derived great assistance in expressing his thoughts.

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For seven years Böehme submitted patiently to the decree of the Council, and kept silent. At length God's Spirit could no longer be restrained, and he began to write again. He had more leisure than formerly, his business having fallen off, but his friends supplied his needs. His books attracted the attention of those interior souls who were able to appreciate them, and he found followers among rich and poor.

Among his many works were "The Three Principles," "The Threefold Life of Man," "Signatura Rerum," "Mysterium Magnum," "Forty Questions," "The Incarnation of Christ," "Dialogue between an Enlightened and an Unenlightened Soul," "True Repentance," "True Regeneration," and "The Supersensual Life."

About a year before his death, Böehme's old enemy, Richter, renewed his persecution with redoubled fury in consequence of the publication of "The Way to Christ." This time Böehme did not remain so quiet, but wrote a defence to Richter's accusations.

The City Council, afraid of the blustering priest, requested Böehme to leave the town lest he might suffer the fate of other, so called, heretics and be burnt alive.

On May 9th, 1624, Böehme left Goerlitz in disguise and went to Dresden, where he found a refuge and was greatly honoured.

He had not been there long before he was taken sick with a fever, when, at his own request, he was taken back to Goerlitz. He told his friends that in three days he would pass away. This was on a Friday. On the following Sunday, November 21st, 1624, he called his son Tobias to his bedside, and asked him if he heard the beautiful music, requesting

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him at the same time to open the door that it might be heard more plainly. At length, after giving his wife certain instructions about his books, and telling her she would not long survive him—as, indeed, she did not—he bade farewell to his family, and exclaimed with a smile, “Now I go hence into Paradise.” Very shortly after, he turned round, gave a deep sigh, and passed into the other world.

Richter had died recently, but his successor demurred to giving Bœhme’s body a decent burial. But the Catholic Count, Hannibal Von Drohna, arrived on the scene, and insisted on its being solemnly interred.

Some of Bœhme’s friends had a cross placed over his grave on which certain occult symbols were carved, among others, I.H.S.V.H. being inscribed in Hebrew.

III

BŒHME’S PERSONAL APPEARANCE—MODESTY —OCCULT POWERS—HIS FRIENDS.

IN personal appearance Bœhme was the reverse of striking. He was short of stature, with a low forehead, rather aquiline nose, a short scanty beard, and greyish eyes. His voice was feeble, and he was deficient in physical strength, though he does not appear to have suffered from ill health during his life. He was mild in speech, unassuming in his conversation, also modest, patient, and gentle. He was intensely spiritual, although he was not what the world would call intellectual. His interior knowledge was too profound for the ordinary understanding.

He realised in its fullest sense that he was a

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sinner, and took no credit for his spiritual knowledge. He maintained that all he wrote was received from God, writing: "Let it never be imagined that I am any greater or any better than other men. When the spirit of God is taken from me I cannot even read so as to understand what I have myself written."

He possessed remarkable occult powers and was able to look into the past and read the future. He sometimes told people all about their past life.

He understood the root from which all languages arise, and also knew plants and animals by their proper names—that is, by their hidden properties or essence, as did our first ancestor, Adam, who gave names to all things according to their properties—not by the arbitrary names by which they are now known. Their outer forms expressed to him their inner qualities, they were the outward and visible symbols of the inward reality. His consciousness being active on the plane where language is universal, though unspoken—lying behind all verbal expression—he was able at times to understand and speak in all the various dialects, like the apostles on the day of Pentecost. He termed this universal speech the language of nature.

Among his friends and disciples Boehme numbered some of the best educated men, including William Law (the English Mystic) and Louis Claude de St. Martin (the "Unknown Philosopher").

IV

GOD—THE ABYSS — THE ETERNAL WILL—
THE ETERNAL WISDOM — THE VIRGIN
SOPHIA—ETERNAL NATURE.

THE first point we will deal with in Bœhme's philosophy is his concept of God. The difficulty we are confronted with in speaking of the Supreme, is that we are compelled to use finite—hence erroneous—terms to express the Infinite. We speak of God's operations as though they had a beginning in time, whereas they have neither beginning nor ending. The finite cannot grasp the Infinite, the measureless cannot be measured. Only the eternal can realise the eternal. Bœhme—like others—laboured under this difficulty, hence his religious system of philosophy is largely allegorical and symbolical. This is unavoidable, and should be borne in mind throughout the study of his writings.

The Universe is the development of one grand Thought. All things are governed by one central law, and all planes of knowledge are related. That which is true upon one is *correspondingly* true upon the others. To fully grasp the one universal principle at work at the core of every phase and aspect of evolution would be to penetrate the very secret of creation. This was the work of the Hermetic Philosophers and the Alchemists. They purposely chose their vague and, to us, strange terms, in order to express very broad generalizations and abstractions, which applied to

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every branch of science—spiritual, psychological, intellectual and also physical, (astronomical, chemical, etc.) Boehme is especially useful in making this very evident by the way in which he boldly adopts and uses their terminology in the exposition of his system of philosophy.

Boehme starts with what he calls the *Abyss*. This Abyss contains within Itself both everything and nothing—everything potentially, yet nothing manifestly—in much the same way that an acorn contains potentially a forest of oaks. Hidden, as it were, within this Abyss is an eternal bottomless uncreated *Will*. This Will desires to become manifest, it ever “willeth to be somewhat.” This is only possible in a state of duality or differentiation, for without contrast there could only be eternal stillness; nothing could be perceived. It would be like a great Eye which sees nothing, because there is no object apart from Itself.

The Will, consequently, fashions a *Mirror*. This Mirror reflects all things—everything that is existing potentially in the Abyss—thereby making them visible. God thus perceives all things in Himself. The dual principle is latent in Him. He is both Byss and Abyss. He could not otherwise know Himself. The manifest is equally eternal with the unmanifest, there never having been a period without manifestation.

Boehme calls this Mirror the Eternal *Wisdom*, the Eternal Idea, or the *Virgin Sophia*. It is the Infinite Mother, the Will being the Infinite Father.

From this Duality proceeds a Trinity. The Father begets the Son, in whom His energies are concentrated, or gathered up. These are again diffused by the Holy Spirit. In like

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manner the Sun gathers up the light and heat of the universe, and diffuses them again by means of its rays.

This manifestation is brought about by that which Bœhme calls Eternal Nature. When the Will—the Father—beholds Himself and His wonders reflected in the Eternal Idea, or Virgin Sophia—the Mother—He desires that they shall not merely remain passive, but shall become active. The Mother also yearns for the manifestation of the marvels latent within Her. Through the union of the Will and the Wisdom—the Father and the Mother—the generation of all things takes place ; the non-existent becomes existent, the unmanifest manifest.

On all planes of the Universe manifestation results from the interaction of two antagonistic, yet complementary forces or principles—active and passive—and their equilibrium. The “Will” and “Wisdom” *Theo-Sophia*, or Father and Mother of the Divine creative powers, become in nature *Force* and *Space*, which beget *Motion*. The interaction of various forms of motion constitute the atom, or ion ; combinations of atoms, or ions, produce chemical entities, etc. Everywhere throughout nature there is a hierarchy of unities sub-dividing into other unities.

V

BOEHME'S SEVEN PROPERTIES—CONTRACTION
OR ASTRINGENCY—FRICTION OR EXPAN-
SION—SENSIBILITY OR ROTATION—THE
LIGHTNING FLASH—THE TRUE LOVE FIRE
—AUDIBILITY OR MANIFESTATION—COR-
PORIETY OR ESSENTIAL WISDOM—UNIVER-
SALITY OF THE SEVEN QUALITIES.

WE now come to what Boehme calls the Seven Qualities of Eternal Nature. These are the seven properties, or forces, through which the Divine Energy operates.

Although each quality has its own specific essence, they yet form one harmonious whole, each being dependent on, or existing within, the other six. All the seven work simultaneously, although we are obliged to speak of them successively in order that our finite minds may grasp them. In much the same way one may behold all the objects in a room at once, yet each has to be described separately.

These seven properties permeate all things, from the highest to the lowest.

The First Quality is that of "*Contraction.*" It is the desire drawing all to itself, and is "astringent," that is, harsh, cold, and sharp in its nature. It produces, as it were, a certain hardness. "In this state there is no

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active life or intelligence, it is merely the first principle of substantiality," the congealing of eternal no-thing into something. It is symbolized by salt.

The Second Quality is that of "*Friction*." This causes a dual action, hence expansion and differentiation. It is the Divine compunction, the desire going forth into multiplicity, and is symbolized by mercury.

The Third Quality is that of "*Sensibility*." It is brought into existence by the action and reaction of the first and second qualities. It is the equilibrium caused by the struggle between the contractive and expansive properties, the fixed and fugitive powers, the centripetal and centrifugal forces. Unable to separate from each other, they produce a rotary motion, which Boehme terms an "Anguish." This "anguish amasses itself into an Essence." It is also called the "fiery strength," and is symbolized by sulphur.

These three qualities, or properties, form the first, or dark, ternary, which is inharmonious.

The Fourth Quality is called the "*lightning flash*." It is brought about by the entrance of the Spirit, which comes like a flash, then diffuses itself as a mild light throughout, and transforms the dark principle, thus ending the strife between the opposing forces. "The Fire, in its devouring, changes the grossness of the first amassed Essence." The flash, or solving Fire of the Word, impresses the Divine Quality into the Life. This Principle is the central and really dominant one, the first three being merely abstract movements. It enters and satisfies their longings.

The next three Qualities constitute the bright ternary.

The Fifth Quality is "Love," or "Light."

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Bœhme speaks of it as “the *true-love fire*.” “The Divine again receives its softness.” The “oil” of Love binds and loosens, builds up and harmonizes the principles to joy and perfection.

The Sixth Quality is intelligible, or vital sound. It is the principle of “*audibility*.” The powers drawn together, or concentrated, in the fifth property are now intelligibly separated, and so become distinct and audible. It is perfect expression, or manifestation, of life.

The Seventh Quality is the last. The previous six are here gathered up into one harmonious whole. Bœhme speaks of it as “Essential Wisdom,” or “God’s *corporiety*.” It is His aspect of reality, the Kingdom of Divine Glory, the uncreated heaven, and is broadly equivalent to “Malkuth,” or “the Kingdom,” of the Kabbala.

Summarized, the Seven Qualities act as follows:—The Positive and Negative Powers by their interaction produce the third property or “anguish,” in other words rotary motion, causing sensibility. These three in their eternal action constitute the basis of life, or the first degree of active life of every creature, whether angel, spirit, man, animal, plant or stone. But when the Eternal—Ain Soph—sends forth the “Verbum Fiat,” the Son, which is a solving fire, these three are transmuted in their essence and become respectively the Light, the Joy, and the Divinity of things. This is the “Magnum Opus” or “Great Work” that must likewise be performed in each individual if he is to re-attain his original nature, and the great transmutation which Christ accomplished.

These seven qualities permeate all things.

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This truth has been rythmically expressed by
Lake Harris in the following lines :—

“ There are seven degrees in the holy sphere
That girdles the outer skies ;
There are seven hues in the atmosphere
Of the Spirit Paradise ;
And the seven lamps burn bright and clear
In the mind, the heart, and the eyes
Of the Angel-spirits from every world
That ever and ever arise.
There are seven ages the Angels know,
In the courts of the Spirit Heaven ;
And seven joys through the spirit flow
From the morn of the heart till even ;
Seven curtains of light wave to and fro
Where the seven great trumpets the angels
blow,
And the throne of God hath a seven-fold glow,
And the Angel hosts are seven.
And a spiral winds from the worlds to the suns,
And every star that shines
In the path of degrees for ever runs,
And the spiral octave climbs ;
And a seven-fold heaven round every one
In the spiral order twines.
There are seven links from God to man,
There are seven links and a three-fold span ;
And seven spheres in the great degree
Of one created immensity.
There are seven octaves of spirit-love
In the heart, the mind, and the heavens above ;
And seven degrees in the frailest thing,
Though it hath but a day for it blossoming.”

VI

THE CREATED UNIVERSE—TIME AND ETERNITY—ALL THINGS ORIGINALLY IN TEMPERATURE.

PASSING from the uncreated heaven or glory of God, the created universe next comes into view. Creation implies that God gives forth or produces something, outside or apart from Himself. It also implies that this something has to be developed from incompleteness to completeness, that is gradually, or piece-meal, as distinguished from the uncreated heaven which is perfect and complete, being part and parcel of Himself.

This giving forth from Himself does not impoverish, it rather enriches him, like a man who imparts his thoughts to others by means of books.

On the other hand there was no necessity for God to create to complete His own perfection. It was a free resolve on his part "to have children in His own likeness ;" an act of pure love without any compulsion.

The Supreme does not create out of nothing. *Ex nihilo nihil fit.* He produces from Eternal Nature and Eternal Wisdom, wherein all things dwell in a latent condition, all contrasts exist in a hidden or non-manifest state. When the "Verbum Fiat" goes forth, these hidden principles—the qualities, forms, colours and powers—arise in a manifestation of glorious celestial orders, in a universe of angelic beings whose life is Light, Joy, and Peace. Here all things are in that state which

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Böehme speaks of as "Temperature," that is in "perfect proportion or analogy," in other words, in complete harmony.

As creation arises creatures manifest successively and independently of one another. They thus come into time and space, as distinct from eternity, eternity being not merely endless duration, but rather simultaneity, rhythmic circularity instead of linear movement. To put it symbolically, time may be expressed by a straight line, and eternity by a circle.

According to Böehme the whole Cosmos is created through the agency of the Seven Natural Properties, the Seven Spirits who stand before the throne of God, the lower "Sephiroth" of the Kabbala.

Although the creation of spirits in freedom brings about a multitude of relative centres in a sense independent of God, this does not necessarily imply disorder or antagonism. All—until sin made its appearance—were in "temperature," or harmony, like the various colours and forms in a garden of flowers, where each enhances the beauty of the rest, thus forming pleasing contrasts, but not producing antagonisms. One quality may predominate in some, another in others, still this does not mar the beauty of the whole, it simply enhances the general effect through their dissimilarity.

Creation unfolds through endless circles. Outside the circle of the uncreated heaven is the created heaven, or angelic world. This far transcends our highest concept of perfection and beauty. At the head of this angelic host God created and placed three Archangels—Michael, Lucifer, and Uriel—who represented respectively the Father, the Son, and the

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Holy Spirit. They were formed out of both the light and the dark principles, the latter creating, as it were, a base for the former.

Boehme states that the angels inhabiting this heaven are very bright and beautiful, and of various hues. They are not hampered by time and space as we are, for they live in eternity. With them all things are within, not outside, one another.

VII

THE DARK PRINCIPLE—POSSIBILITY OF EVIL
—FALL OF LUCIFER—EQUILIBRIUM OF
THINGS DISTURBED — THE APPALLING
TURBA.

WE now reach a point in Boehme's philosophy which touches on the dark principle in God. This brings us face to face with that riddle of the universe, the origin of evil.

Although that which is called the dark, or fiery principle, exists in God, it is ever overcome by the light. It never becomes active, but remains in a latent or passive condition. It is simply a tendency, which allows itself to be vanquished by the light. There is no such thing as evil or disorder in God. In Him all is perfectly balanced and harmonious.

When, however, God creates independent intelligent spirits, and endues them with free-will, the possibility of evil or disorder arises. Possessing the power to choose either the nature centre—egoism—or the light centre—love—every spirit having these two contrasting principles within himself—they are liable to temptation, until of their own freewill they fix themselves in one or the other. Should

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they desire that which is false, choosing the self centre instead of the God centre, disorder ensues through the harmonious flow of the divine life being checked, and finally pushed back, by meeting a counter current proceeding from self-will. Obscuration takes the place of light.

A false desire having become kindled, it continually increases in intensity, ever burning more fiercely, causing a confusion which Böehme calls "turba." The "Wheel of Birth" thus literally becomes a "Wheel of Anguish." Instead of the Divine Light soothing the opposing forces it stirs them up till the anguish becomes persistent, and existence an anxiety and struggle throughout.

The devil and hell thus make their appearance when the negative or dark ternary, in separation from the light, becomes actual in intelligent creation, instead of remaining in concealment or latency. While the possibility of evil is good, being necessary to form a ground upon which character may be shaped, its actuality is bad.

Evil, as an actuality, first made its appearance, according to Böehme, when the Archangel Lucifer opened his self centre, instead of keeping it closed, and so fell from the Divine order. This self centre or "centrum naturæ" is the foundation upon which hell rests. "The wrath of God has existed from all eternity, though not as *wrath*, but as fire latent in a tree or stone, until it is aroused." In God, wrath and love harmonize, severity and mercy balance each other.

While the Archangels Michael and Uriel, remained true to God as their centre, Lucifer, who knew the will of God and the misery that would ensue from the departure therefrom,

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moved by a lust of knowledge for its own sake, which begat pride, chose the "centrum naturæ." He set his will in opposition to the Divine. He moved not as God moved in him. Unbalanced curiosity, and a desire for something new, perhaps even higher than God Himself, entered his mind. He refused to sacrifice the Fire-principle—egoism and selfishness—to the Light-principle—love. The Dark-principle within him sought to manifest itself. He opened his "centrum naturæ," and fell. He became self centred instead of God centred.

The foundation of hell hidden from all eternity, now became manifest. Lucifer had aroused the principle of the wrath of God. The dark ternary had dominion over him.

This action started another centre of operative force at variance with the Primordial Centre, or Will. The result was that the whole gear of nature became loosened and a new world arose in which the dual principles were separated, and ever one in excess of the other, a world of good and evil unequally mingled. The Divine Will retired to an inner ground and the creaturely will worked forth its downward way. From out of the world of one element emerged the world of four elements. An appalling "turba" or confusion followed.

Concerning this, the ancient Hermetists taught that to re-attain the "Prima Materia" one must "reconcile extremes." Fire and water, air and earth, must be brought into unity again by harmonious reconstruction. The Prima Materia is the element of immortality, perfect, plastic, moulded by the will for creative purposes without the necessity of painful toil or extreme agony.

VIII

OUR EARTH — MAN — ADAM — HIS SUPER-
NATURAL POWERS — IN TEMPERATURE —
TEMPTATION AND FALL.

ACCORDING to Boëhme our earth was situated within the sphere of Lucifer. The six qualities were generating the seventh, through which they might manifest in a sweet and orderly manner. Nature was then very ethereal and exalted. But Lucifer's fall created an evil sphere by separating the love and wrath, in other words, the mercy and severity of God, thus upsetting their equilibrium and causing general disorder and ruin. Nature became very gross and unable to work harmoniously, a striking example of which may be seen in the evolution of the abnormal monsters of the old Saurian epoch. Still the forces of light gradually gained on those of darkness. At length the equilibrium of things was sufficiently restored to allow nature to culminate in man.

Man, in the true sense, is not merely a separate intellectual animal, but a composite being containing the elements of all things. He is neither male nor female separately, but twain-one in his complete state, and possesses faculties that bring him in touch with all things on every plane of existence ; and enable him to apprehend everything in the universe. His capacity is boundless. There is nothing beyond his reach. These hidden or latent powers being unknown or ignored by modern

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scientists, the man they talk about is an incomplete, rudimentary, and unnatural being, leading an aimless existence, subject to, instead of lord and master of, nature. The Rationalist knows nothing about the real man, he is merely cognizant of his external skin.

Our first parent—Adam—was a luminous being, permeated by his spiritual, or rather celestial, essence. His body was not gross, like ours, but ethereal in its nature. The inner man kept the external man imprisoned within itself, and penetrated it in a manner comparable to iron, which glows if it is penetrated by fire, so that it seems as if it were itself fire. But when the fire becomes extinct the dark iron becomes manifest.

Bœhme thus describes the state of Adam before his fall. "The mind of Adam was innocent like that of a child playing with the wonders of its Father. There was in him no selfish knowledge of evil will, no avarice, pride, envy, anger, but a pure enjoyment of love." "The inner man stood in heaven. . . . He knew the language of God and the angels, and the language of nature . . . giving names to all creatures to each according to its own essence and quality." "Fire, air, water, and earth could not tame him ; no fire burned him, no water drowned him, no air suffocated him ; all that lived stood in awe of him."

Adam was placed originally in a locality of supernal beauty and harmony, which had been restored to order, and from which he would have spread over the rest of the world ; and redeemed it from the ill effects, still existing, produced by the fall of Lucifer.

In his unfallen state, Adam—or more strictly speaking Adam-Eve, for the woman was involved in the man—consisted of the

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three principles, spirit, soul and body. His spirit belonged to the light principle, his soul to the dark or fire principle, and his body to the world of sense. These three qualities were "in temperature," that is in perfect harmony, the two latter being subordinate to the former. He understood alike, divine, human, and natural things.

In order that Adam might become truly virtuous it was needful for him to be tempted, for apart from the possibility of vice there can be no virtue. It was a sore conflict. The three principles each struggled for the mastery. Adam allowed himself to be tempted by Lucifer into a false lust, and set his desire and imagination upon the world. Curiosity prompted him to try and ascertain what it would be like to be "out of temperature," how the opposite qualities, the hard and the soft, the bitter and the sweet, would taste apart from each other. He gave way, the Divine image grew pale and he became earthly.

Adam's fall, however, was not like that of Lucifer. Lucifer placed himself in *direct* opposition to God, Adam only in *indirect*. He had no wish to oppose God, he merely desired earthly enjoyments, but in order to secure these he was compelled to yield to Lucifer, and so disobey God.

IX

ADAM-EVE—ANDROGYNY—EVE SEPARATED
FROM ADAM—SUBJECT TO NATURAL LAW
—ANTAGONISM OF THE ELEMENTS—DIS-
ORDER THROUGHOUT NATURE—ANIMAL
MEN—THE INCARNATION.

BŒHME states that Adam — or, more correctly, Adam-Eve—was originally androgynous, a perfect being containing all that is masculine and all that is feminine. When Adam's imagination and desires became set on this world—Eve within him consenting—seeing that the lower animals existed in pairs, that the male and female organisms were separate, he was seized with an earthly lust to propagate, like them, in a “bestial” manner. To save Adam from a still greater calamity, the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon him, during which Eve—the feminine part of Adam's nature—was taken from him, and became a separate being. When he awoke the woman stood before him, his wife Eve.

The unity of the complete being was now severed. Henceforth the two sexes were distinct. Setting their imaginations upon each other, they ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree, and became subject to physical death. They could no longer remain in Paradise, either internally or externally.

They became more and more earthly in their nature. They begat children in the merely natural way, like the animal creation, and were subject to the ills and troubles of the world in which, by their own act, they had placed themselves. The Virgin Sophia re-

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ceded, retiring to a more interior region of their nature, from which to watch over and guard them.

This brings us to the existing state of things. Boehme, in unison with the Bible, states that in consequence of the fall, both of Lucifer and Adam, mankind has become subject to corruption, though he still yearns to be redeemed. Nature has also become gross through the dissolution of "temperature." The four elements—fire, air, water, and earth—which previous to the fall were only one element, and which then appeared only in harmonious contrasts, now stand in antagonism to each other. Although sustained by the powerful bond of natural law to which God has subjected them, they yet fight and struggle in an empty and resultless manner. The effect of this is seen in the general disorder and confusion which exists throughout this planet. Violent storms and destructive earthquakes alternate with dead calms and murky fogs. The earth brings forth the noxious weed and poisonous berry, as well as the beautiful flower and delicious fruit; the cruel reptile and savage beast, as also the noble and gentle animal. Curse, decay, corruption, and death struggle with blessing, health, and life. The nature-spirit has fashioned out of the kingdom of phantasy, strange creatures that do naught but torment and vex other creatures, who exist side by side with them, and whose sole end is to serve and be of use. The wrath and the love of God are manifested everywhere.

The same thing repeats itself in man, who is the apex of creation. He has sunk through sin, more or less, to the merely animal plane of existence, so that the animal world projects itself into the human. Man on this earth has

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acquired a tendency to the bestial, and presents a glaring contrast to his original dignity. Every man has, as it were, an animal in his life. Hence we find wolfish men, foxy men, apish men and so on. Men's dispositions correspond very largely to those of the animals. Man has to extirpate these instincts so that he may become wholly human and thus again in the image of God. When man is restored to the divine image time will end, consequently the essential import of history is the redemption of humanity.

Although in idea man precedes the rest of creation, in actuality he comes last. He was to be the meditator between heaven and earth, spirit and nature, and the crown of all things. In reality man is an antitype of the Incarnation. Had Adam remained obedient to God, nature would ultimately have been restored to order and rescued from the state of "turba," or confusion, into which it had fallen through the action of Lucifer. Adam was a kind of pivot, or gate, through whom God might operate for the redemption of the fallen angels. Adam's fall, however, necessitated the Incarnation. Christ as the second Adam re-establishes man in his primal dignity as lord of creation. From this will follow the final redemption, not only of man, but also of the fallen angels, together with the lower creation, thus ultimately restoring all thing to their primal order.

X

THE VIRGIN BIRTH—CHRIST'S DUAL NATURE
—THE ATONEMENT AND REDEMPTION—
THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION—
NECESSITY OF A VITAL FAITH—MAN'S
STATE FIXED AT DEATH—THE CONSUM-
MATION OF ALL THINGS — BEHME'S
SPIRITUALITY—AN APPRECIATION.

BEHME was a firm believer in the historical Christ. He writes "we Christians believe . . . that He (Jesus) was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin, without any blemishing of her virgin chastity. Through the Incarnation of God in Jesus, there arose a Divine Human being of the essence both of God and Mary. He was conceived of His mother without sin. Through her very conception Mary first attained perfect virginity, the Virgin Sophia thereby penetrating her essence. As son of man Christ's soul became absolutely pervaded by the Eternal Word and the Heavenly Virgin. Christ is thus not only son of the Virgin Mary, but also of the Heavenly Virgin who united Herself with Mary. This Virgin Sophia, who departed from Adam when he fell, re-entered Christ, the second Adam, through whom She is restored to us."

As the first Adam, before he fell, was androgynous, so also was Christ the second Adam. Although externally His form was masculine in an interior sense Christ was an-

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drogynous. His work embraces the reunion of the severed qualities and the restoration of the complete man to "temperature," to that grade where he is neither exclusively male nor female, but a combination of both. As the archetypal man, Christ united in His own person, not only the highest excellencies of the masculine, but also the best attributes of the feminine, character.

The whole of Christ's work pivots on the Atonement and the Redemption. He came to heal all things and re-establish "temperature." The Light principle, the dark Fire principle, and the principle of this world were all present in Jesus, as in Adam. Whereas Adam, when tempted, allowed the principle of this world to prevail, Christ fixed His imagination wholly upon the Father and the Kingdom of Light, thereby subjecting the lower principle and re-establishing "temperature" or harmony in His own person. He quenched "wrath" by His voluntary self-devotion. He surrendered Himself unto death so that He might vanquish it from within. He brought not only the body and soul, but also the spiritual ego itself, into absolute harmony, by sacrificing everything in His death and passion.

When He arose from the dead it was in a paradisiacal body which, as it were, absorbed His earthly one. He finally ascended to heaven, that is, His paradisiacal body became invisible. Heaven is not a distant locality, but a sphere existing side by side with the material universe, though veiled from mortal sight.

In order to pass out of the "turba" in which we have become immersed, and regain "temperature," we must be regenerated by the Holy

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Spirit. A merely historical faith, Bœhme reiterates again and again, will never save any man. Wrapping ourselves round externally with the robe of Christ's righteousness is worse than useless if inwardly we remain wild beasts. We must forsake the dark Fire or devillish principle, and the principle of this world, with its lusts and appetites, and enter into the Light principle, lost through Adam's fall but regained by Christ.

Christ, according to Bœhme, "tinctures" our will in order to lead it to something higher. Faith must be a vitalizing and sanctifying power. There must exist between Christ and the believer a mystical bond of union, which is to grow and increase, as life develops.

Bœhme's leading idea is *life*, prayer being the means whereby the soul soars up above the "centrum naturæ," the abyss of hell, and the spirit of this world, and penetrates into the Light, into Christ, into the Heart of God. In true prayer, will and desire are one.

Bœhme maintains that when a man dies his state becomes fixed, either for good or ill. After death the will cannot be changed. Whatever quality was strongest in the soul during life becomes continually stronger, so that the evil eventually surrender themselves to the devil, while the good enter into heaven. Even on earth all stand in heaven and hell, although they may not know it, so that when the body perishes the holy soul is already in heaven, and the damned in hell. Those souls who are in a sort of half-regenerate condition ultimately reach heaven, but only after much suffering, while those who have never heard of Christ can be saved if they stand in the light principle.

According to Bœhme creation was the act

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of the Father, the incarnation that of the Son, while the end of the world will be brought about through the operation of the Holy Ghost. The earth will then be restored to "temperature," or harmony, the evil sinking into darkness, while the good will be transfigured, their bodies becoming etherealized like Christ's after His resurrection. Man will be restored to the image of God, and the present distinction of sex will disappear. All will be androgynous, as was Adam before he fell.

Bœhme was neither a Theist nor a Pantheist, exclusively, but rather a combination of both. His God is not simply a speculative impersonal abstraction, neither is He a limited personality. He writes : " The external world is not God . . . it is merely a state of existence wherein God is manifesting Himself." Elsewhere he adds "do not imagine God to be a blind power, existing and moving in, or beyond, or above heaven, having neither reason nor knowledge . . . No ! not this is the Father, but He is an omnipotent, all-wise, all-knowing God in Himself ; good, kind, and merciful, joyful, and even joy itself."

Bœhme was the first of the great Protestant Mystics, and remained throughout his life a humble member of the Lutheran Church. In him we have the spectacle of an uneducated man conversant with the deepest mysteries of the Universe.

Bœhme's philosophy has absorbed so much space that but little is left to speak of his intense spirituality, which was even deeper than his philosophy was profound. He was devoutly Christian to his inmost core.

Gichtel writing in 1698 says "I have searched through many Mystics in my time,

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but found in none of these what . . . I have found in this enlightened shoemaker . . . If there is in scripture anything obscure, magical or mystical, Boehme solves it all."

In his "Appreciation of Jacob Boehme," Alexander Whyte remarks "'The Way to Christ' is a production of the very greatest depth and strength, but it is the depth and strength of the heart and the conscience rather than the depth and strength of the understanding and imagination. . . . There is all the reality, inwardness and spirituality of 'The Imitation' in it, together with a sweep of imagination, and a grasp of understanding as well as both a sweetness and a bitterness of heart that even A Kempis never comes near." Elsewhere he writes "not Augustine, not Luther, not Bunyan, not Baxter, not Shephard has ever written anything of more evangelical depth and strength and passion and pathos."

There are hidden riches in Boehme which are practically exhaustless, and will more than repay anyone the trouble of unearthing them.

Boehme sought the heart of Christ before all things, hence these latter were added unto him. He became a mouthpiece of God to all who were willing to receive his message, and to such he was able to reveal the deep things of God.

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